

Environmental Awareness Pontoon Boat Tour for Jordan Lake One Water Association

On Wednesday morning, April 18, members of the Jordan Lake One Water Association (JLOWA) were aboard an Environmental Awareness Pontoon Boat Tour organized by the Triangle J Council of Governments (TJCOG) in partnership with Clean Jordan Lake.

The tour left from the Seaforth Boat Ramps at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area. Cary Water Systems Manager Alex Jones explained the operation of the new Cary-North Chatham County water intake structure. The boats traveled several miles south toward Jordan Dam for a look at the Haw River flow after a heavy rain. Along the way, the boats stopped in a cove for a look at trash and tires flushed off the watershed after rainfalls. Clean Jordan Lake Past President Fran DiGiano said, “Trash gives a strong visual image of the impact of urbanization that also implies something about how nutrients get to the lake as well.”

TJCOG representative Jen Schmitz, a water resources planner, said, “JLOWA was created in 2017 to bring together local governments, conservation groups, universities, water utilities, agriculture, and private industry stakeholders interested in collaborating on innovative water quality approaches in the Jordan Lake watershed that go beyond the status quo in order to realize watershed-wide social, economic, and environmental benefits. So far, TJCOG has facilitated four meetings that have each attracted upwards of 50 participants.” DiGiano added that “funding from the Syngenta Community Grant Program enabled us to offer this chance to bring to life those meeting room conversations about integrated water management of Jordan Lake, legislative initiatives, and the future of the watershed with increasing urbanization.”

Schmitz concluded, “JLOWA members thoroughly enjoyed being out on the lake and it prompted lively discussions about water quality issues. We are looking forward to continuing these conversations and addressing these issues together.”

The participants were: Jones, DiGiano, Schmitz, Mayor Pam Hemminger, Chapel Hill; Mayor pro tem Lori Bush, Cary; Chair Commissioner Diana Hales, Chatham County; Council member DeDreana Freeman, City of Durham; former Mayor Darryl Moss, Creedmoor (now with NC Conservation Network and candidate for NC House District 2 seat); Chair Commissioner Amy Galey, Alamance County; Mayor TJ Cawley, Morrisville; Bill Holman, State Director of the Conservation Fund; Brad Ives, Director of the UNC Policy Collaboratory; Cameron Colvin, Water Resources Planner, Piedmont Triad Regional Council. TJCOG was also represented by Andrea Eilers, Energy and Environment Program Manager and Alana Keegan, Engagement Specialist; Jan Sherwin, Board member, Clean Jordan Lake.